

Bidwell and Gallagher Factory  
(Fremont Glass Warehouse)  
315 Bidwell Avenue  
Fremont  
Sandusky County  
Ohio

HAER NO. OH-38

HAER  
OHIO,  
72 - FREMO,  
3 -

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record  
Mid-Atlantic Region  
National Park Service  
U. S. Department of the Interior  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

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Bidwell and Gallagher Factory  
(Fremont Glass Warehouse)

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Location: 315 Bidwell Avenue  
Fremont, Sandusky County, Ohio 43420

UTM: 17.322260.4578810  
USGS Quadrangle: Fremont East

Date of Construction: Circa 1830

Present Owner: L. E. and Jane McDowell  
114 North Wood Street  
Fremont, Ohio 43420

Present Use: Vacant, demolition scheduled for December 1985

Significance: The Bidwell and Gallagher Factory has been identified by the Ohio Historic Preservation Office as the oldest existing industrial/commercial building in Sandusky County. It is located adjacent to the Sandusky River and contributed to the growth of the river port of Lower Sandusky, later named Fremont.

Project Information: This documentation was undertaken in November 1985, in accordance with the Memorandum of Agreement by the Department of Housing and Urban Development as a mitigative measure prior to the demolition of the structure. The project undertaken will be a fifty-unit housing complex for the elderly, financed by a HUD Section 202 loan.

Julaine M. Stricker  
Executive Director  
Homes/Casas, Incorporated  
Fremont, Ohio

Transmitted by: Jean P. Yearby, HAER, 1986

### Historical Narrative

The present city of Fremont, Ohio, is a merger of two separate villages, Lower Sandusky and Croghansville.

Croghansville was built on the east bank of the Sandusky River in 1816 and was named after Colonel George T. Croghan, hero of the Battle of Fort Stephenson. The flood of 1817 caused so much damage to Croghansville that the plans for a school and naval shipyard on the east banks were abandoned and the village moved across the river to merge with the more established Lower Sandusky. The town was originally platted as the town of Sandusky. It became known as Lower Sandusky, derived from the lower rapids of the Sandusky River to distinguish it from the upper rapids and the Village of Upper Sandusky. Rutherford B. Hayes, then a local attorney, suggested in 1849 that the name Lower Sandusky be changed to Fremont after explorer John C. Fremont.

The Bidwell and Gallagher Factory is located on the northwest corner of the current Bidwell Avenue and Ewing Street intersection. These streets were platted December 6, 1817, and recorded in Sandusky County as Water Street and Ewing Street. This area, the earliest platted in Lower Sandusky, was the center of the community for commercial and industrial concerns.

The Sandusky River was the principal route of travel and the ease of transportation made Lower Sandusky the center of trade for approximately 100 miles. Beginning in 1818, steamboats regularly docked at Lower Sandusky. The port contained a ship building yard and warehouses necessary to receive large grain shipments. The swifter transportation by rail prior to the Civil War diminished the river traffic. By that time, however, Lower Sandusky was firmly established on the west bank of the river. Railroads were constructed to service the warehouses and industry which were located in the river valley.

A 1928 Title Abstract traces ownership back to a land grant by U. S. President, James Monroe, to William W. Green in 1824. Sixty-five acres were then transferred to Mary P. and Alexander Ewing in 1836. It is not known if the factory existed at the time of sale to the Ewings. First documented mention of the factory is in the information on the Bidwell and Gallagher partnership in 1845. The fact that Gallagher purchased half interest in the carding and clothing factory to form that partnership suggests that the building existed prior to 1845.

Riverius Bidwell, known as Squire Bidwell, left a tanning business in upstate New York and began acquiring property and businesses in Lower Sandusky. He purchased tracts 10 and 11 from the Ewing family in 1846, which included the site of the factory located at the corner of Ewing and Water Street. Water Street was renamed Bidwell Avenue in his honor around 1872. At one time, he owned the village water power, a flour mill and flax seed mill. Bidwell used water power to operate a turning lathe in manufacturing cedar pins utilized in the construction of railroads.

Bidwell formed a partnership in 1845 with David Gallagher, an early merchant in Lower Sandusky, Gallagher had arrived in the area prior to 1812 and was assistant commissary for Fort Stephenson for several years. He served as the first Village Treasurer of Lower Sandusky in 1815. By 1818, he was a clerk with J. S. and G. G. Olmsted, owners of the largest store/trading post between Detroit and Cleveland. Gallagher later became a partner of the Olmsteds and began purchasing real estate. The land for the first permanent Methodist Episcopal church was donated by him. Upon Gallagher's death in 1860, the Court of Common Pleas adjourned for the funeral as a mark of respect.

The Bidwell and Gallagher Factory was a carding and clothing concern which operated as a partnership until 1851. Gallagher sued Bidwell to dissolve the partnership on the grounds that Bidwell neglected the business, caused debts to accumulate and refused to honor his share of indebtedness. The petition was settled with the partnership being dissolved in 1852 and the factory sold to Gallagher for \$1,400 as the highest and best bidder. Bidwell continued operating his other concerns including the mill located next to the factory. Gallagher operated the business until 1856, at which time the real estate and factory, known as lots 355 and 356, were sold.

Four years prior to his death, Gallagher sold the parcel to Daniel L. June. He held the factory solely and with several partners at various times from 1856 until 1880. June apparently purchased the property as an investment and initially leased it to others. A 1869 Street Guide lists Downs & Company as the occupants with a wool carding and dressing concern which is the same type of business operated by the Bidwell and Gallagher partnership and then by Gallagher alone. June had entered a partnership in a steamship engine repair shop with his brother, David June. That partnership was dissolved with David June taking on new partners including O. S. French and A. M. June. The D. June Company had built new works and apparently used the Bidwell and Gallagher Factory as a parts warehouse. Several mortgages had been made on the property and were satisfied until 1879. Christian Depp and Nicholas Ensminger foreclosed on the property for the \$1,140.34 due and unpaid on a \$3,000 mortgage. A sheriff's sale was held, since Daniel L. June had left the area and resided in Oregon. O. S. French purchased the property for \$2,415, the highest and best bidder. The City of Fremont Directory, printed in 1889, lists the factory under French, Orestas S. (D. June and Company). The 1893-94 directory has D. June and Company (including David June, O. S. French and A. M. June; Engine Supplies) listed as the occupants. The property then transferred to A. M. June, another partner in the D. June Company. A. M. June sold the factory property to C. W. Tschumy and held a mortgage for \$1,000.

C. W. Tschumy had begun a furniture business in 1854 and began using the Bidwell and Gallagher Factory as a warehouse in 1882. Mechanics liens were filed against the property and were satisfied when he sold the property to Riverside Fuel and Supply in 1899. The furniture business begun by Tschumy has been in continuous operation and still operates in downtown Fremont.

Riverside Fuel and Supply Company, distributing agent for Standard Oil Company, purchased the property from Tschumy in 1899. The company maintained its office and yard on West State Street near the bridge. The Bidwell and Gallagher Factory was used as a warehouse for inventory. The company listed itself as suppliers of coal, coke, wood, salt and cement.

In 1908, the factory was sold to Unsinger Razor Blade Company. This partnership had begun in 1905 with Peter Unsinger and Philip H. Unsinger. The business was incorporated in 1908 and manufactured razor blades, cutlery, razor blade machinery and screw machine products. This company was purchased by Henkel Clauss in 1920. The Henkel Company began in 1906 and, upon its merger in 1919 with Clauss Cutlery, Henkel - Clauss became the largest cutlery concern in the world.

Unsinger Razor, renamed the CU-PLY Company, evidently failed to prosper, as within a few years the name disappeared from Henkel - Clauss records. The main factory for Henkel - Clauss was located on the east side of Fremont and not at the Bidwell and Gallagher Factory. In 1921, Germany was permitted to ship shears and scissors duty free to the United States at half the price of American shears. This helped trigger a depression in the market and, in 1926, the Bidwell and Gallagher Factory was leased to Louis J. Michles for \$40 per month.

In 1927, Michles assigned his lease to his son, Joe Michles. Joe Michles then purchased the factory from Henkel - Clauss in 1928. The building was used as a warehouse for Michles' scrap metal business. The business purchased steel mills, dismantled them and sold the scrap. Around 1950, the factory was leased to L. E. McDowell for use in his Fremont Glass Company. The Bidwell and Gallagher Factory became known as the Fremont Glass Warehouse at that time. McDowell purchased the property in 1957 and continued to use it as a warehouse and estimating office until about 1980. Since that time, the building has been vacant except for minor storage. Fremont Glass continues to operate in a building across Ewing Street facing Bidwell Avenue.

#### Architectural Narrative

The exact data of construction and the original use of the Bidwell and Gallagher Factory are not known. The Ohio Historic Preservation Office has its construction listed as circa 1830, based on architectural evidence and supplemented by its context within the community. A brick addition was made to the rear of the building, date unknown.

The Federal design of the warehouse was common and no information was found concerning the names associated with the actual construction or development of the site. It does not appear that the factory was innovative or unique in either its design or the technology used in its construction and/or operation.

The two-story industrial warehouse was constructed entirely of wood except for a later constructed masonry bearing wall addition to the east.

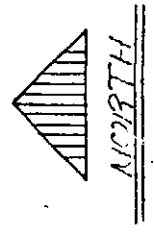
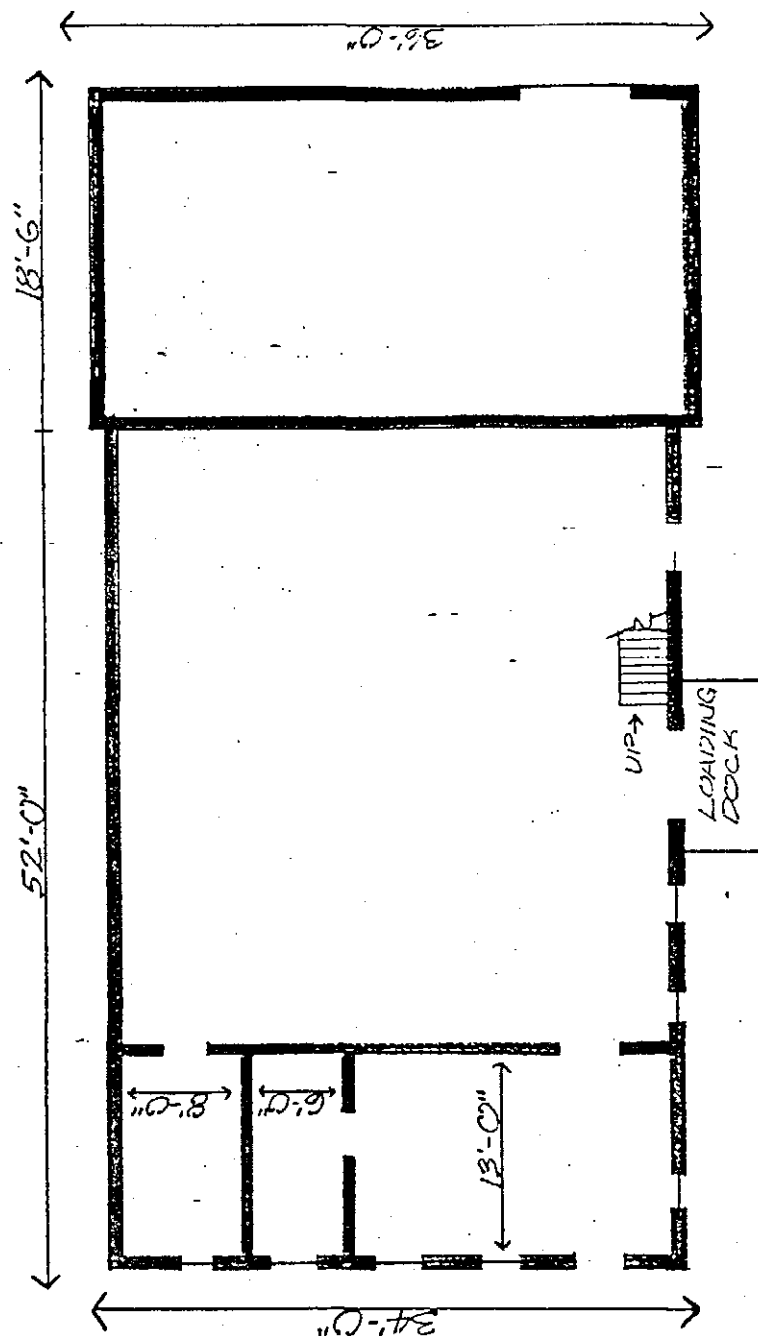
The wood frame structure rests on a stone foundation forming a crawl space. The masonry addition is an open two-story space with a concrete floor and apparently a concrete foundation.

The first and second floors and roof appear to clear span bearing on the north and south walls. The roof structure is a simple truss system with a hip structure including a small dormer at the west end. The roof continues at the same pitch over the masonry portion.

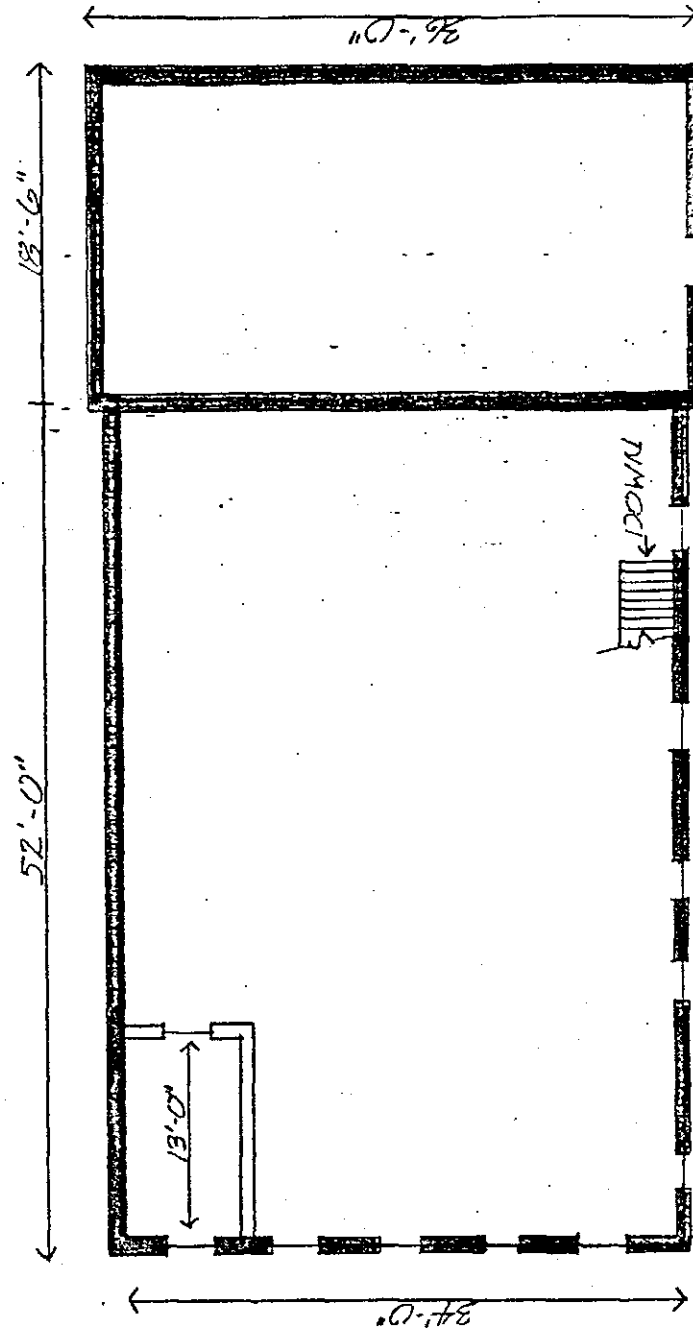
The lap siding covered exterior is dominated at the west elevation by wood reliefs in the Federal style. A pilaster symbolically supports a wood frieze between the first and second floor windows. A less-defined frieze combines with soffit and roof edge trim.

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1<sup>ST</sup> FLOOR



2ND FLOOR

